



March 23, 2017

The Honorable Ted Yoho
United States House of Representatives
511 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

On behalf of the Association of the United States Navy, we would like to pledge our support for H.R. 512, the Working to Integrate Networks Guaranteeing Member Access Now Act or the WINGMAN Act. The new program would offer veterans the option to receive their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit as a stipend to complete a career transition internship with a qualifying business. The bill requires special consideration be paid to sectors most affected by the economy's growing skills gap, such as manufacturing and small business.

This bill directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide each veteran who submits a claim for VA benefits with an opportunity to permit a covered congressional employee in the office of the veteran's Member of Congress to have read-only access to all of the veteran's records in the Veterans Benefits Administration databases. A member may designate up to two such covered congressional employees.

The bill highlights that a covered congressional employee may not be recognized as an agent or attorney with respect to veterans' benefit claims. Funds under this bill may not be used to design or administer any training for covered congressional employees.

Through rigorous accountability and reporting requirements, the GI Internship Program Act ensures the participating veterans and businesses get the most out of the program. The bill requires veterans to work at least 35 hours per week for between six months and a year. Participating businesses must impart valuable training and experience, and verify a reasonable expectation of hiring the participating veterans upon completion of their internships.

Thank you for taking an active role in such an important issue to the Military and Veteran community by working to improve the lives and careers of those who served our great nation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 703-548-5800 or at michael.little@ausn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Joseph Little". To the right of the signature, there is a typed name "Michael J. Little" and the text "ABSH²(AW/Sea) USNR" in blue ink.

Michael J. Little
Director of Legislative Affairs

